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Urban Living and Working Conditions

General Conditions

1. The living conditions of people in the towns of the Lithuanian SSR are, on the whole, fairly tolerable. Compared with independent Lithuania, however, the standard of living and the quality of goods is lower, although it is possible to buy any article desired in the shops.
2. Cars can be bought only in Minsk or Riga, not in Lithuania itself, but there are many more cars to be seen in Lithuania now than before the war. Many members of the privileged class own cars, mostly the Moskvich. To own a Pobeda attracts a good deal of attention.
3. Townspeople are not badly dressed. Cloth is imported mostly from elsewhere in the USSR, including the Latvian SSR, Poland, or Czechoslovakia, and is of medium quality. To get a good suit, one must buy the material at the tailors's artel (guild) - in Kaunas there is one called Danda - and have it made to order. There are also individual tailors who work unofficially because they cannot pay the very heavy taxes. As they are always afraid of being denounced, they must choose their clients very carefully. The same applies to shoemakers. It is possible to buy good shirts, even silk ones, in the shops.

Prices

4. The food townspeople have now is worse, on the whole, than before the war, but if one has enough money, one can buy anything one wants in the food shops. Only sugar is scarce, and one must queue for it. The peasants bring their produce to the towns for sale but are permitted to do this only after fulfilling their compulsory deliveries to the State. In consequence, they are forbidden to market their produce during certain periods of the

25X1A

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25X1A

year. At such times there are, for example, no potatoes for sale in the towns, but the townspeople go to the villages themselves and buy what they want. Butter, milk, cheese, and bacon are always brought to market.

5. In Kaunas all the food shops are nationalized, and are numbered instead of named. The same applies to restaurants. Anyone can go to a restaurant and order a meal; a dinner costs approximately nine rubles. The restaurants, cafes, and beer halls are always full. They are frequented mostly by administration officials. Townspeople drink as much as they did before the war. The best restaurants have orchestras; the former Metropoli and Versailles restaurants in Kaunas are quite luxurious and very expensive.
6. The following are a few food and drink prices prevailing in the Lithuanian SSR in July 1950:

	<u>Rubles</u>
Milk (1 liter).....	2.50
Butter, per kg.....	40
Bread, black, per kg.....	1.50
Sugar, per kg.....	12-14
Bacon (pork lard) per kg.....	40-45
Meat, beef, per kg.....	8
Meat, pork, per kg.....	12
Beer, per bottle.....	4.20
Schnapps, per liter.....	40-60
Liqueur, per bottle.....	120

7. The following are a few prices of general items prevailing in the Lithuanian SSR in July 1950:

	<u>Rubles</u>
Cigarettes (one pack).....	1.50-2.00
Gloves (leather, lined).....	150
Gloves (motorcyclist's).....	120
Shirts.....	120-150
Cloth for a suit, per meter.....	100-450
Cost of tailoring a suit (payment to the tailors' artel).....	200
A suit made to order (privately).....	500-1500-1700
Shoes (from Czechoslovakia).....	300-320
Fountain pen (poor quality).....	40
Man's watch, Pobeda.....	400-450
Lady's watch, Zvezda.....	400
Bicycle.....	400-500
Motorcycle.....	4-5,000
Moskvich car (resembles an Opel).....	9,000
Pobeda car (resembles Chevrolet).....	15,000

Rates and Salaries

8. The following are a few of the rates of pay prevailing in the Lithuanian SSR in July 1950:

	<u>Rubles per month</u>
Worker, skilled.....	500-600
Worker, unskilled.....	approximately 400
Clerk.....	approximately 500
Factory manager.....	1,500
Doctor.....	600-800

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25X1A

Dentist.....	600
Actor (good).....	1,500-3,000
Teacher (primary school).....	600
Teacher (secondary school with 28-30 lessons per week).....	1,400
Director of secondary school.....	up to 1,500
University professor.....	2,000-3,000
Member of Academy of Science.....	10,000
President of Academy of Science (Prof. Matulis).....	30,000
Deputy President of Academy of Science (Prof. Ziugzda).....	25,000
President of the Republic (J. Paleckis).....	20,000
Ministers of the Republic.....	10,000-15,000

9. It is generally recognized that doctors and dentists receive very low salaries, and there was talk of a petition's being drawn up asking for improved rates. Doctors can practice privately, but only after their working hours in the hospitals or clinics.
10. The exceptionally high salaries paid to the President and Deputy President of the Academy of Science are considered by "good" Lithuanians as evidence that they have "sold themselves entirely" to the Soviets, who need them "to falsify Lithuanian science, literature, history, etc." This applies particularly, it is said, to Prof. J. Ziugzda, but not to the Secretary of the Academy, Prof. Bieliukas, who is regarded as a good patriot.

Housing and Fuel

11. All larger houses (from 280-300 sq m) have been nationalized. The rent for apartments in such buildings, consisting of 3 rooms, kitchen, bath and toilet, is 40-70 rubles per month. Administration officials and workers can get such apartments through official channels. Apartments in private houses are more expensive. For example, an apartment of two rooms and kitchen, without bath and toilet, costs 120 rubles per month. The higher administrative and Party officials live quite luxuriously, but there are no special shops for them with lower prices. There is, as yet, no special tendency to infiltrate strangers into one's apartment or family.
12. Fuel for domestic heating, such as coal, wood, and briquettes, can be purchased as required from the State stores. Firewood costs approximately 50-55 rubles per cubic meter. Some officials, for example, railway officials, can buy coal at reduced prices: approximately three rubles per centner (1 centner = 50 kgs).

Working Conditions

13. The present standard of living of workers in the Lithuanian SSR is lower than before the war; they work eight hours a day, six days a week. Overtime is also paid. Administration workers also work an eight-hour six-day week. Most of the officials are new, but some of the old ones have been retained. The standard required for acceptance as an administration official is very low. These officials can not be accused of

-3-

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opportunism any more than ordinary workers; most of the people mechanically do as they are told, and very few are anxious to advance themselves by means of the "Party Line". All administration officials are obliged to attend courses on the history of the Communist Party and to pass the examinations.

14. Nearly all the old factories in Kaunas have been rebuilt and are again in operation, such as Inkaras Rubber Works, Drobe Clothing Factory, Neris Metal Works, among others, and the large stockyards and meat-processing plant Maistas (the old name has been retained) which was destroyed during the war. Only small workshops or repair shops such as those in Lukso Street in Kaunas still remain in private hands. There do not appear to be any new factories built since the war.
15. Discipline in the factories is exceedingly severe. If a worker is late or takes a day off without justification, he is penalized or dismissed. There are so many propaganda lectures and meetings for the workers to attend that it would seem as though the real intention is to leave them no free time at all in which to think for themselves.
16. There is no sabotage in the factories. People are so afraid of the security police that they do not think of doing any sabotage or of engaging in any subversive activities. If something happens in a factory, even without any intention of sabotage, those suspected of being responsible are arrested immediately. For instance, at the Petrasiumai Electric Power Station a storehouse was burned down and the watchman, who was completely innocent, was arrested and released only after more than six months.
17. On the whole, the workers are not satisfied with the present situation; the personalities may have changed, but the bosses and "overlords" are still there, and, compared with pre-war days, the position of the workers has grown worse. It is only the privileged few and the careerists who "have arrived" who feel happy. Should there be a revolution, the great majority of the workers would turn against the Communists.

Production Figures

18. In 1950, statistics of all industries were published to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of Soviet Lithuania, in order to show the "enormous" rise in production compared with 1939. The official statistics do not correspond with the facts, but no one dares to tell the real truth. The industrial managers are compelled to present wrong figures and powerless to act otherwise. For example, it was officially stated that production of the dairy industry in 1950 was five times higher than in 1939, whereas, according to reliable information given by a responsible man in the industry, milk production was, in fact, only half that of 1939.

Rural Living and Working Conditions

Collectivization

19. Collectivization is regarded by the people as the greatest calamity for the Lithuanian peasants. The propaganda for it was started on a larger scale in 1948, and it was carried out with the greatest drive during 1949. In 1950, it was somewhat slowed down. On the average, about 80 per cent of the peasants have already been forced to join the collective farms, although in the Vilnius region it is only about 30 per cent; in some districts it is up to 100 per cent.
20. Collectivization was "prepared" psychologically by the deportations in 1948 and 1949, which mainly involved the peasants. The methods used to force them to join the collective farms were propaganda and direct threats of

SECRET/CONTROL-U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25X1A

arrest or deportation; heavy taxes were imposed, and when these were paid fresh ones were levied. The small-holder who has a 15 hectare farm must pay a yearly tax of 12,000 rubles in addition to his compulsory delivery of agricultural produce. On the other hand, the farmer who joins the collective farms receives help and privileges from the Soviets, and pays lower taxes because he is covered by a system of taxation which is quite different.*

21. The first to be forced to join the collective farms were the village headmen and the comparatively prosperous farmers. The rich farmers were simply proclaimed kulaks and evicted, and their only chance of avoiding deportation was to move to the towns and find work. However, many were, in fact, deported. Many of their farms are still unoccupied and now derelict; neighbors have removed windows and doors, and the fields lie fallow.
22. Members of the collective farms are given small plots of land for their own use, and they are allowed to keep cows and goats, but not horses. They must feed their cattle from their own resources. The private owner of a cow, however, must pay 300 rubles and deliver to the State 100 liters of milk per year.
23. After making their compulsory deliveries to the State, the farmers can sell their surplus produce on the free markets. There are official prices: those the State pays to the farmers, and unofficial: those the farmer can get on the free market. The official prices are very low, and the quotas to be delivered are high. Consequently, the surplus that remains to be sold is not large. The State pays 4-5 rubles per centner to the farmer for his grain, but bread costs 1.50 rubles per kg, and the black market price for a centner of grain is 200 rubles. The official price for potatoes is 2 rubles per centner, and on the black market 40-60 rubles. Besides grain and potatoes, the farmers also have to make deliveries to the State of meat, milk, and flax. Recently one could easily buy pigs at 3,000 rubles (weight 3 centners), horses at 300 rubles, and cows at 2,000-3,000 rubles.
24. The chairman of a collective farm is elected from among its members; the local Party Committee usually chooses the candidate for election. Experience has shown that much depends on the quality of the administration: in one instance the farmers were quite satisfied and received adequate pay in rubles (they are paid each working day) and in agricultural produce at the end of the year, but there have been other instances when they received nothing because of maladministration.
25. The reaction of the partisans against collectivization was very strong, and their acts of reprisal against those who joined slowed down the process of collectivization for a few months, but could not stop it.
26. It is difficult to assess the results of collectivization as a whole, because it is still in a transitional stage. Farmers continue to live on their own individual farms, and psychologically they cannot accommodate themselves to the fact that it is common land and that all the cattle do not belong to them any more. They behave as if the property were still their own, try to retain their own horses, harvest their hay together, and divide it among themselves, and so forth.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25X1A

27. Early in 1949, the rumor spread that one could walk out of a collective farm by applying to the local administration and paying 100 rubles. Some peasants in the Kaunas region believed this and acted upon it; they were all deported in June 1949.

Village Activity

28. People in the villages are dressed much as they were before, but they are far worse off since the currency reform. The peasants drink as much as they did before the war, but less than during the German occupation. They produce their own "Schnapps", the so-called "Saaogon", for their own use but not for sale. Should the militia find a bottle destined for sale, the penalty is one year's imprisonment; and, if a still is discovered, the sentence is five years.
29. Until 1949, political propaganda among the peasants was weak, but it has been intensified since then. For this purpose, teachers (Party members) from the towns are used, and there is also a system of patronage of collective farms by town offices, factories, secondary schools, universities, etc., but until now much of this is still pro forma.

Forests

30. There has been very large scale cutting down in the forests, but this has now somewhat abated. Prienai forest has suffered extensively.

25X1A Comment: As a matter of fact, the kolkhoz farmer pays no taxes in money or in agricultural produce on what he earns through the collective farm; he is taxed on his earnings from privately owned cattle, or from the yield of the small piece of land allotted to him for his personal use, but only if such earnings exceed 1,200 rubles per year, whereas the individual farmer who is not a member of a collective farm pays high taxes on everything he earns. Similarly, the collective farm as a whole is taxed at a much lower rate than the privately owned farm.

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